



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Sell More, For More

A year and a half ago, Annociate Musabwamana of eastern Rwanda was struggling to earn a living with a small plot of land. The meager 50 kilograms of maize she harvested each season was not enough. She faced hard times, wondering how to feed her four children and pay for basic needs.

Then, along with other members of her cooperative, Let Us Develop Ourselves, Musabwamana joined the Sell More For More (SMFM) training program through a project that links producers of staple crops like beans and maize to markets. The project is funded by USAID in support of [Feed the Future](#), the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative.

"Before the SMFM trainings, I was not yielding a profit from the crops I was growing. Having learned post-harvest handling techniques through the trainings, I am now harvesting around 300 kilograms of maize and making some profit," said Musabwamana, who is vice president of the 120-member cooperative—76 of whom are women.

USAID launched the market-oriented trainings to help Rwandan farmer organizations improve farming techniques and build business plans. Like the name says, they "sell more" high-quality products "for more" revenue.

Results have been striking. In 2012, SMFM won a Best Practice and Innovation Award from the International Fund for Agricultural Development and InterAction for creating new tools and curriculum that teach farmers how to succeed in a demanding marketplace and maintain a competitive edge.

That same year, USAID conducted a household survey that showed that 93 percent of trained farmers reported increased incomes because of improved threshing techniques, controlled storage facilities and reliable transportation options as a result of the support.

Since the trainings began, farmers have reported average post-harvest losses at less than 5 percent, down from an average of 20 percent before joining SMFM. This significant decrease in lost crops means farmers now have more to sell and are consistently able to bring in a larger income.

Training with a Twist

Eighty percent of Rwandans rely on agriculture for their livelihoods. Given this concentration of small-scale farming, with its tight profit margins, food security is a constant concern.

The biannual harvests become critical events. Smallholder farmers like Musabwamana can lose a significant amount of their beans and maize—often at least 25 percent—when they harvest at the wrong time or due to improper post-harvest storage and handling.

In addition to the loss of crops, prices paid for what remains suffer if goods show signs of discoloration, rot or insect infestation. These losses and defects reduce a farmer's income and buying power, and can negatively affect family health and nutrition. A primary goal of the SMFM training program is to improve food security by improving quality and reducing loss.

Over 100 cooperatives and nearly 60,000 farmers have been trained through the program. Its six modules—leadership, marketing, business planning, recordkeeping, post-harvest handling and warehouse management—may sound familiar. However, the training is not typical.

[Continue reading this article](#) in the May/June 2013 edition of USAID FrontLines.